



Indianapolis
Gregory A. Ballard, Mayor

NEWS RELEASE

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MAYOR BALLARD RELEASES FIVE-POINT PLAN FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN INDIANAPOLIS

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today unveiled his education platform that includes strategies to increase public education opportunities within the city that will position Indianapolis as a national leader in innovative education reform.

“The future of our city involves the creation of new, independent, high-quality public schools that consistently educate and serve all students exceptionally well,” said Mayor Ballard. “New, independent, high-quality public schools are an element of – and can be a catalyst for – neighborhood, workforce and economic development.”

Mayor Ballard’s plan builds upon the many successes of his first term in office, which include:

- Received more than 50 applications for new charter schools and opened eight schools – four of which are nationally unique models – for a total of 23 schools;
- Secured up to \$1.4 million in grants;
- Piloted a model high school accountability system;
- Created a new performance system for students in special education programs;
- Featured in nine national publications;
- Made eight charter school renewal decisions;
- Launched enhanced school performance information via the Internet;
- Expanded the Office of Charter Schools into the Office of Education Innovation;
- Petitioned the Indiana General Assembly to pass a law that allows the Mayor to petition the State Board of Education to transfer underperforming schools to local oversight; and
- Implemented an intensive community school model with United Way of Central Indiana.

Mayor Ballard’s Five-Point Education Plan, which he announced at the regular meeting of the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee, will build upon this success and create new opportunities for better student learning and performance.

1. Make Indianapolis National Headquarters for Education Reform Movement

Due to the bold steps taken by Governor Mitch Daniels, Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Tony Bennett and state lawmakers, Indiana and Indianapolis are at the forefront of education reform. Indianapolis is home

to very successful reform-focused organizations and programs, including: The Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis, The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, Lumina Foundation for Education, the Woodrow Wilson Indiana Teaching Fellowship, The Mind Trust, Teach for America, The New Teacher Project, Stand for Children, College Summit, The Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce's Education Coalition, IUPUI's Talent Alliance and Diploma Plus.

To make Indianapolis the national headquarters for this growing movement, Mayor Ballard will attract education reform leaders and groups to locate in our city. Mayor Ballard will offer an income tax credit to nonprofit education reform organizations that locate in the city. This credit would refund local income taxes to the nonprofit group to reinvest in their mission.

2. Charter Incubator to Open 20 New Schools by 2016

Despite the number of charters growing more than 40 percent since 2008, Indianapolis still does not have enough high-quality charter schools to meet the need in our community, especially for students enrolled in chronically low-performing schools. Mayor Ballard's vision is to make Indianapolis the most compelling place in the nation to establish the next generation of exceptional charter schools. To accomplish this, the city is partnering with The Mind Trust to establish a Charter School Incubator. Mayor Ballard's goal for the Incubator is to launch 20 new high-quality charter schools in Indianapolis over five years, serving as many as 6,000 students – which would nearly double the number of charter schools available in the city. The Incubator, on which Mayor Ballard has been working with The Mind Trust for more than a year, would have a fundraising goal of more than \$5 million, which includes up to \$2 million from the City through RebuildIndy funding, pending City-County Council approval. The remaining funding is expected to come from private sources.

3. Expedite Replication of Successful Existing Charter Schools

Indianapolis is home to 23 charter schools, many operating successfully with students coming in to attend from low-performing traditional public schools. In addition to incubating new charters, Mayor Ballard will expedite the process to speed up the ability of these schools to replicate their successes in other parts of our community. Mayor Ballard believes that fostering replication of charters with a proven record of achievement is an important way to increase the number of excellent options available to students.

4. Create Schools Targeting High-Growth Job Sectors

Indianapolis is emerging as a national leader in many high-growth career fields. Recently the *Wall Street Journal* identified Indianapolis as one of the nation's seven top growth hubs, highlighting the city's success in attracting and growing life science jobs. Mayor Ballard will work with education leaders, third-party organizations and charter school operators to develop charter schools that prepare students for jobs in these high-growth sectors. These schools would provide state-required learning but place added emphasis in classes and skills that prepare students for post-secondary education and careers in these high-growth fields. Mayor Ballard envisions schools specializing in healthcare, life sciences and technology – as a beginning.

5. Petition to Return Local Oversight of State Turnaround Schools

In 2011, Mayor Ballard worked with state lawmakers to give the city the ability to petition the State Board of Education to return schools subject to state turnaround to local control. Mayor Ballard already is working with the Center for Urban and Multicultural Education at IUPUI, the Indiana Department of Education, and the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis to develop a local management plan for the four IPS schools that have been assigned turnaround operators. In 2012, Mayor Ballard will petition the state for local management of these local schools.

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